

## **WISCONSIN BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION SURVEY PROGRAM (WIBRES)**

Since 1984, SBC, formerly Ameritech Wisconsin, in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of COMMERCE, and its predecessor agencies, has conducted a business retention and expansion program designed to help Wisconsin communities determine the factors that affect business retention and growth. The data obtained has been used to plan and implement sound economic development strategies in the community.

Since 1984, over 150 community surveys have been produced. Some communities (and counties) have done the survey several times. Surveys are compiled annually to develop a composite picture of the business climate across Wisconsin. In 1997 the Department of COMMERCE accepted transfer of ownership of the Wisconsin Business Retention and Expansion Survey Program (WIBRES).

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### **PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM**

The survey creates a confidential, comprehensive data profile on businesses in the community in order to develop a systematic approach to retention. Follow-up studies indicate how economic changes have affected the business community; determine current needs and plans; and verify improvements made in the local business climate. This information enables the community to develop a targeted retention program.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM**

The major objectives of the survey are to:

1. Gain an understanding of the business community's view of the local economy.
2. Determine the future business plans of companies (i.e., expansion and/or relocation), and then set up an early warning system for local action.
3. Acquaint business leaders with assistance available through various economic development programs.
4. Improve the communications bridge between local/county government and the business community.
5. Identify specific concerns and problems of the local businesses, and provide swift, effective solutions.

An overall objective of the business retention and expansion project is related to the process itself. By conducting personal interviews to obtain the survey data, business executives are provided an opportunity to share their views to municipal representatives. This helps local governments to understand the implications of their policies for this very important segment of the community. The underlying goal is to be responsive to business needs.

COMMERCE will coordinate surveys through the Area Development Managers (ADMs) and produce community reports. However, individual communities will be responsible for the production of multiple reports. ADMs will screen communities for the capability and commitment to do a community-wide survey. After the report is generated, ADMs will make presentations of the final reports.

CONTACT AREA DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS BY REGION

**Area Development Managers**

Region 1: Marty Ambros	715/836-2630
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